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For Immediate Release:

Audubon International Recognizes Dretzka Park Golf Course for Environmental Excellence

Course Receives "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" Designation

Milwaukee (March 27, 2015) – Audubon International has awarded Dretzka Park Golf Course the "Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary" designation. The course is one of only three in the state to receive the certification.

"I'd like to thank Audubon International for recognizing our achievements in environmental stewardship at Dretzka Park," said Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele. "The efforts that led to receiving this certification are a great example of hardworking Milwaukee County employees engaging in strategic, big-picture efforts. Not only does this demonstrate our continual commitment to environmental sustainability, this work also makes our parks more enjoyable for the people of Milwaukee County."

Leading the effort to obtain the certification was Mike Stein, Golf Course Superintendent, with assistance from Natural Areas Coordinator Brian Russart and his staff.

To meet the certification requirements, Dretzka demonstrated its practices in six environmental categories.

"Environmental Planning" was documented in a 10-year restoration and management plan which considers all ecological activities.

"Wildlife and Habitat Management" was shown through staff surveys of ephemeral aquatic invertebrates (such as crayfish), and aquatic invasive plant species.

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“Outreach and Education” was proven through the bluebird trail created in association with the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin, surveys conducted with elementary-school children, and a planned demonstration area of honeybees as pollinators. The educational component extends to the clubhouse where a tree cookie shows the effect of Emerald Ash Borer, and the bar surface is constructed from a tree removed due to the effects of Emerald Ash Borer.

“Turf Management” was demonstrated through the use of integrated pest management.

“Water Conservation” was exemplified by the practice of using as little water as possible to offer quality turf. This includes localized watering of dry areas. The course is also in the process of planting all native species around the clubhouse. Native species tolerate the state’s varied weather conditions.

“Water-quality Management” was demonstrated through staff’s taking baseline surveys of dissolved oxygen, nutrients, and stream flow.

Stein said, “I’ve always been close to nature. It’s nice to be able to provide golfers with the experience of being in an urban area and seeing deer, wild turkey, Cooper’s hawk and other wildlife sharing the course.”

To maintain the sanctuary designation, a course must recertify every three years to ensure it is upholding certification standards.

For more information on Dretzka Park Golf Course, visit milwaukeecountygolfcourses.com/dretzka_details.

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